



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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are fairly common, but very local; indeed you may find everywhere on the shore little nests and homes of plants, where they seem to flourish, while they leave what you would suppose to be an exactly similar situation quite deserted. It would be a very useful piece of work to make a careful list of all the plants you find on your shore, both of those that are rare and those that are common, noting the situation in which you found each particular specimen and whether it was or was not fairly abundant. The London Catalogue of British Plants is a great help in indicating the flora of any district, as you have nothing to do but to mark off the names of your plants in the list, and if you interleave your catalogue with blank paper you can easily make notes or sketches as you go along. It is much better to depend on an authorised list, than on your own knowledge in saying whether a plant is rare or common. The London Catalogue provides a census of all the recognised British plants, and so you will see at once whether your find is a good one or not. This practice of marking your catalogue will help to make you familiar with the scientific names, without any trouble, as you will soon find out for yourselves. It is not possible to mention all the plants you are likely to find anywhere on the sea-shore, but I will take as a typical group the sea lavender, to which group the thrift (*Armeria Maritima*) belongs. Well marked by their heads of purple flowers and narrow oblong leaves, they are easily recognised. We have four species and four named varieties. Here then are eight sea lavenders to discover, and how are you to find out which of them you have got? Read carefully the description of all, you have given in your text book, and you will not be far wrong if you are careful to notice the distinct characteristics of each species. I call your attention to sea lavender especially in order to show you that when you find an exactly similar plant with very small leaves and flowers, it does not necessarily follow that it is the same plant as the large one it closely resembles. That this is often the case I know: stunted specimens are common, from growing under unsuitable conditions, still you must learn to observe scientifically, and to know how many kinds we possess of the various wild flowers which surround us; to know, for instance, that there are more than four or five kinds of roses, sedges, rushes, hawk weeds, etc., and where and how they differ. This appears more difficult than it really is if you only have courage to set about it in the right way.

Many excellent lists of flowers have been sent in for May; including the list for Humphrey Head, we had 135 new flowers for the month.

THE "P.R." LETTER BAG.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of Correspondents]

DEAR EDITOR,—One of our principles is that "The work of the Union shall be so arranged as to help parents of all classes." Some branches find it difficult to carry out this principle, and as regards the monthly lectures many questions as to locality, hour and subject have to be dealt with, which increase the difficulties. Still there are indirect means by which we are already carrying out the idea, and we must all feel how much P.N.E.U. teaching helps us in our Mothers' Meetings, Club Talks and visiting generally. The truths which have become assimilated and are thus passed on are very often quite as valuable as those heard at first hand. One member has, with success, discussed the "Parents' Union" in a Sunday-afternoon talk to working-men; another has lectured on "Habit" to a woman's co-operative guild, and found that even the philosophy and physiology of habit were listened to with interest by her audience. Others should feel encouraged to do the same. The nature lore that we acquire *through* our children and *for* our children, because P.N.E.U. has taught us that we must not leave this undone, can also be passed on to our village children. Even town members have found it feasible to invite Board School children for occasional Natural History rambles, and thus to extend the work of their Natural History Clubs. If an organized club could be started in connection with the Children's Country Holiday Fund it would help the town children to get much more real benefit out of their fortnight's holiday—at present many of them look bored and dull, and though physically greatly benefited many opportunities for mental and moral good are lost. Perhaps country visitors will take up this idea. The Board Schools were well represented at the Natural History Club exhibition in London last year, and we hope will be so again. The handiworks and brush-drawing learnt through P.N.E.U. agencies naturally help us all in our various classes and clubs, and our Union must rejoice at the great work Mrs. Steinthal is doing in this direction. Altogether we have reason to feel encouraged, and members will, doubtless, find more opportunities for extending the work on these lines.

All parents, who feel the help they have derived from the *Review* and the Union, must consider it their duty to put such teaching in the hands of every parent they come across, and must feel anxious to know how they can help forward the movement. Most of us feel that the *Parents' Review* is the best means of introducing the Union, and members would be doing useful work if they would take copies on their summer holidays, and show them, as well as leaflets and reports, to their friends. It is also very useful if members can induce their doctors and dentists, both in town and country, to allow the *Review* to be placed in their waiting rooms, and endeavour to place it at local booksellers, clubs, railway stations,

hotels, &c.* Many members have told me that they first saw the *Review* on a doctor's table, and have felt consequently grateful to the introducer. When trying to induce friends to join, one is often met by the reply that the children are still so young, but members who have once really understood P.N.E.U. teaching usually regret that they did not know of it early enough. This feeling should help those who earnestly try to further the movement, and also the fact that it is almost unknown for members who have once grasped our principles to retire from membership and to regret that they joined. Personally I can say that I have only met with gratitude for introducing the Union to my friends, and many mothers echo the sentiments contained in a letter signed a "Grateful Mother" in last August's *Review*.

When we remember our motto, "For the children's sake," we are surely encouraged in doing what is sometimes unpleasant and disagreeable to ourselves, as propaganda often is.

Yours faithfully,

H. FRANKLIN.

DEAR EDITOR,—I must tell you what a very successful afternoon we had yesterday. Helen and Cherry and I joined the second excursion of the Reading Natural History Club. There are now 130 members, and there were 80 who went yesterday to Mortimer, close to Silchester, which I think you know. (There are Roman remains there.) We went in the opposite direction from Mortimer, across common and wood, to a pond and marsh. There were most interesting flowers and insects—buck-bean, asphodel, great S. John's wort, &c. I found a rare *campanula patula*. The delight of it was that *everybody*—each child—was so keenly interested, all eager to find plants and know about them. We had plenty of instructors; I counted six able botanists, one of whom gave a little lecture at tea-time. I told them that you had asked me all about the Club, and had sent your good wishes to it.

K. L. H. D.

8, BLANDFORD PLACE, CLARENCE GATE, N.W.

DEAR MADAM,—May I ask you to kindly insert a notice in the next month's *Parents' Review* to the effect that "Free Method," "Pussy Boxes," and all the educational works by the late Miss S. A. Miller are now to be obtained *solely* from me, her niece; as by her desire they, with all her MSS., have been sent to me to arrange in such form as may forward the cause to which she devoted her life. I heard this morning from a lady who was present at a P.N.E.U. meeting lately, when the lecturer advocated the use of the "Pussy Boxes," giving the address of my aunt's former printer, not knowing that he had been obliged to send everything belonging to my aunt's system to me. Believing that my aunt was a contributor to your magazine, and a warm supporter of the work of your Society, I trust you will pardon my writing to you, and that you will be so good as to consider this request.

I am, Madam, yours truly,

JOSEPHA K. MILLER.

* Miss Blogg, 28, Victoria Street, will furnish *Reviews* for this purpose.

DEAR EDITOR,—The interest of the magazines and newspapers this month is confined to the Education Bill introduced by the Government, and as this question is largely political, it lies outside the scope of my letters to you, and I must not discuss it. There is, however, the less need to discuss it, as at the time of writing it is certain that the Bill cannot pass this session, in spite of the majority of 267, by which its second reading was carried. But whilst abstaining from detailed criticism, I would beg to be allowed to point out that the agitation for the total exclusion of religious teaching from our public elementary schools has made immense progress during the last few months. Nor is this surprising. I am convinced that the vast majority of parents desire that their children should be taught the rudiments of the Christian faith as held in common by Christians of all denominations, and that this can be done is proved by the history of the London School Board since the date of the famous "Compromise." But when some partisans (Churchmen and Dissenters alike) are seen willing to risk the loss of the teaching of the Bible entirely rather than abandon some advantage to their own communion, the advocates of purely secular schools argue with some appearance of reason. What their ideal is can be seen from two articles in this month's *Westminster Review*, though the writer of one of them—an avowed secularist—destroys the force of his arguments by the narrow-minded bigotry of his tone, which he would be the first to condemn in an opponent. As another sign of this advance, it is instructive to note a resolution passed last week at a meeting of the London Trades Council, under the presidency of an able member of the London School Board, in favour of compulsory free education, with three good meals per day for all to the age of 14, and *no religious teaching*. If our elementary schools ever become secularized, this deplorable result will be due—it cannot be too strongly insisted—to the ill-advised action of sincerely good men, whose zeal for religion cannot be questioned, but who allow their differences on minor matters to prevent their acting in unity on essentials.

Any help that can be given to enable the voluntary schools to continue their most necessary work and to add to their efficiency, will be gladly given; but the various denominations in whose charge they are must remember, as the Bishop of London wrote in the *Times* of June 9th, that their only claim to retain the management and receive this help is in the evidence they give of real sacrifice made by their supporters to maintain them—they must be willing, that is, to show their sense of the importance of the religious teaching imparted in them, by contributing much in money and personal service to their support.

June 17th, 1896.

PATER JUNIOR.